

death-rate. To-day the breeding and feeding of children are largely done by two entirely different classes. One class, the most inefficient, begets the children, and these are supported by the efficient class. So argues the Editor of *New Generation* in the April and May 1943 numbers. He quotes Mrs. Burns' statement regarding her recent inquiry in the County of Durham, that "Quite a few women who are actually certified mentally defective are married and have had large families." Moreover, he adds, the children of two-thirds of mentally defective mothers are illegitimate (*Sterilization*, Hinton and Calcutt).

There is nothing to indicate that Sir William Beveridge has considered these eugenic and demographic aspects, and whether indiscriminate children's allowances will not, in the absence of contraception and sterilization, aggravate the gravely deteriorated differential birth-rate.

The Report no doubt has valuable proposals for simplifying and amalgamating the many branches of social security, but it has the defect of being a one-man report. The Interdepartmental Committee members were only advisers and assessors, and the public is in the dark how far each or any of them agreed or disagreed with the proposals. The members, except the Chairman, were all civil servants. A national scheme of such magnitude is generally based on a careful inquiry by a Royal Commission of expert non-officials and officials, but no non-officials, including eugenists, demographers, and economists other than the Chairman, were members of the Committees.

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To the Editor, Eugenics Review

SIR,—I agree with your correspondent Mr. Wicksteed Armstrong that children's allowances should not be given without any regard as to how the money is spent. Sir William Beveridge is not alone among legislators and planners in paying no attention to the social problem group. If we do have children's allowances we ought at the same time to make provision for ensuring that they are rightly administered and thus checking cruelty to children. The N.S.P.C.C. does its best, but the laws are quite inadequate to deal with the matter. If children's welfare officers were appointed to co-operate with the schools and health visitors and to visit all unsatisfactory cases reported to them; and if the laws were altered enabling them to take action and remove children from certain wholly undesirable parents, this should be a safeguard for the proper administration of children's allowances.

At present we have cases where a mother having got tired of her children deserts them and has more children by another man, her first family having to be adopted by the Guardians. As a Guardian and welfare worker of many years' experience, I deplore the fact that the law as it stands is unable to prevent "cruelty to children" except in the grossest and most brutal form. It is quite wrong to leave this duty to a voluntary society. What is or ought to be everybody's responsibility should be undertaken by the State. This would be a good opportunity to press for the reform.

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